



THE COUNTY OF KAUAI

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News Release

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Kaua'i police confirm cause of death for Kōloa couple

WAILUA – Kaua'i police have confirmed additional details about the two unattended deaths that occurred Thursday in Wailua.

Autopsies performed have confirmed that Tia Obrero died of blunt force injuries and strangulation, and Michael Blackstad died of a drowning. The autopsy also confirmed Blackstad sustained postmortem injuries from a shark attack.

Obrero, age 26 of Kōloa, was found unresponsive by a bystander early Thursday morning along the shoreline of the beach area known as Kitchens in Wailua. Preliminary evidence that day revealed she may have died from an assault.

Later that morning, a multi-agency land and sea search was initiated for Obrero's 26-year-old husband, Blackstad, who was believed to be with Obrero Wednesday night. He was later found dead Thursday on the rocky shoreline behind Kaua'i Beach Resort in Wailua.

"We thank the public for their patience while our detectives conducted a thorough and objective investigation in order to secure justice and some sense of closure for all families involved," stated Assistant Chief of the Investigative Services Bureau Bryson Ponce. "Our investigation has led us to believe that Michael Blackstad is responsible for the death of his wife, Tia Obrero. We believe Michael died shortly after in waters off Wailua. Although the investigation remains ongoing, there are no other facts or evidence at this time to lead us to any other conclusions. On behalf of our entire department, we extend our deepest sympathies to their families, loved ones, and especially their two young children."

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